

What is Claimed is:

1. A method for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user inputs, said method comprising:

- collecting user information from a user having access to said search mechanism;
- monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of said user with said search mechanism to perform a search;
- monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;
- determining context-based user feedback data describing said search.

2. The method of claim 1, where said user information comprises one or more of the following:

- the speed of said user's connection to said search mechanism;
- the type of said user's connection to said search mechanism;
- a classification of said user's use of said search mechanism;
- background information concerning said user; or
- the language which said user is using to perform said search.

3. The method of claim 1, where said step of collecting said user information comprises:

- requesting said user information from said user;
- accepting responses from said user.

4. At least one of an operating system, a computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of computer-executable instructions, a co-processing device, a computing device, and a modulated data signal carrying computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.

5. A method for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user inputs, said method comprising:

- monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a

search;

monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

determining if explicit feedback should be collected, and if so, collecting explicit feedback data from said user; and

determining context-based user feedback data describing said search, said context-based user feedback data comprising said explicit feedback data if said explicit user feedback data was collected.

6. The method of claim 5, where said step of determining if explicit feedback should be collected comprises:

determining if a snooze request is in effect from said user.

7. The method of claim 6, where said step of determining if a snooze request is in effect from said user comprises:

determining if said user has issued a snooze request; and

determining if an associated time period associated with said snooze request has elapsed.

8. The method of claim 5, where said step of determining if explicit feedback should be collected comprises:

storing target data concerning a target value for how often explicit feedback should be collected for searches; and

allowing explicit feedback should be collected in such a manner as to approximately reach said target value for how often explicit feedback is collected.

9. At least one of an operating system, a computer readable medium having stored thereon a plurality of computer-executable instructions, a co-processing device, a computing device, and a modulated data signal carrying computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 5.

10. A method for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism is implemented in a web browser, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user, said method comprising:

monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search, said user behavior data comprising data concerning at least one selected from among the following group: query performed by said user, dwell time on said results page; click time on said results page; position of result clicked; more results requested by said user; result dwell time; result page size; or result page actions;

monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search; and

determining context-based user feedback data describing said search.

11. A system for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user inputs, said system comprising:

user information collector for collecting user information from a user having access to said search mechanism;

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of said user with said search mechanism to perform a search;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

context-based user feedback data accumulator for determining context-based user feedback data describing said search.

12. The system of claim 11, where said user information comprises one or more of the following:

the speed of said user's connection to said search mechanism;

the type of said user's connection to said search mechanism;

a classification of said user's use of said search mechanism;

background information concerning said user; or

the language which said user is using to perform said search.

13. The system of claim 11, where said user information collector requests said user information from said user and accepts responses from said user.

14. A system for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user inputs, said system comprising:

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search;

explicit feedback collection mechanism for determining if explicit feedback should be collected, and if so, collecting explicit feedback data from said user; and

context-based user feedback data accumulator for determining context-based user feedback data describing said search, said context-based user feedback data comprising said explicit feedback data if said explicit user feedback data was collected.

15. The system of claim 14, where said explicit feedback collection mechanism determines if a snooze request is in effect from said user.

16. The system of claim 15, where determination if a snooze request is in effect from said specific user comprises:

a determination of whether said user has issued a snooze request; and

a determination of whether an associated time period associated with said snooze request has elapsed.

17. The system of claim 14, where said explicit feedback collection mechanism stores target data concerning a target value for how often explicit feedback should be collected for searches; and allows explicit feedback to be collected in such a manner as to approximately reach said target value for how often explicit feedback is collected.

18. A system for gathering context-based user feedback for a search mechanism is implemented in a web browser, where said search mechanism is adapted to perform a search in response to user inputs, said system comprising:

user behavior monitor for monitoring of said search mechanism for user behavior data regarding an interaction of a user having access to said search mechanism with said search mechanism to perform a search, said user behavior data comprising data concerning at least one selected from among the following group: requery performed by said user, dwell time on said results page; click time on said results page; position of result clicked; more results requested by said user; result dwell time; result page size; or result page actions;

context monitor for monitoring said search mechanism for search mechanism response data regarding said search; and

context-based user feedback data accumulator for determining context-based user feedback data describing said search.